

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 L-03 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 SPTA-03 ISO-00
/059 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:JWHITING:JG

APPROVED BY ARA/PAN:JCHAAHR

L - TFORTUNE

DOD/ISA - COL KNOWLES

S/PTA - DPOPPER

-----046899 152126Z /73

R 150318Z JUL 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

INFO OSD ISA/IA WASHDC

JCS WASHDC 0565

HQ DA WASHDC/DAMA/DAMO/DALO

CDRFORSCOM FT MCPHERESON GA

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

CDRDARCOM ALEXANDRIA VA

CDRTECOM ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND MD/DRSTE-TO

CDR 193DINFBDE FT AMADOR CZ

CDR USATTC FT CLAYTON CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 179020

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, MARR, US, PN

SUBJECT: U.S. ARMY TROPIC TEST CENTER

1. THE US WAS AUTHORIZED TO CONDUCT, AMONG OTHER ACTIVITIES, TESTING OF HUMAN AND MATERIEL PERFORMANCE AT THE U.S. ARMY TROPIC TEST CENTER (USATTC) UNDER THE AGREEMENT ON CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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REPUBLIC OF PANAMA, SIGNED IN WASHINGTON ON SEPTEMBER 7, 1977. THIS AUTHORIZATION WOULD COMMENCE WHEN THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY COMES INTO FORCE, PRESUMABLY OCTOBER 1, 1979.

2. THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE USATTC FACILITIES IN THE CANAL ZONE ARE LOCATED IN THE 16,500 ACRES OF THE GAMBOA TEST AREA. THAT AREA DOES NOT FALL WITHIN A DEFENSE SITE

OR AREA OF COORDINATION UNDER THE TREATY. THE SEPTEMBER 7, 1977 AGREEMENT PROVIDES THAT THE "U.S. MAY USE INSTALLATIONS WITHIN DEFENSE SITES AND MILITARY AREAS OF COORDINATION, AND IN SUCH OTHER AREAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA AS MAY BE MUTUALLY AGREED." IT IS HOPED THAT AN AGREEMENT COVERING ALL OR PART OF THE GAMBOA TEST AREA WILL BE OBTAINED WELL IN ADVANCE OF ENTRY INTO FORCE OF

THE TREATY; SHOULD SUCH AN AGREEMENT NOT BE POSSIBLE USATTC PLANS TO MOVE TO CERRO PALADO WITHIN THE CANAL OPERATING AREA. SHOULD PANAMA NOT GRANT PERMISSION TO USE THE CERRO PALADO AREA, THE USATTC WOULD NEED TO RE-LOCATE ITS TEST FACILITIES TO AN AREA WHICH IS EITHER A TREATY-DEFINED DEFENSE SITE OR AN AREA OF MILITARY COORDINATION, PROBABLY EMPIRE RANGE AN AREA OF MILITARY COORDINATION.

3. IN COORDINATION WITH USSOUTHCOM AND USATTC, THE EMBASSY SHOULD DEVELOP A PLAN TO BE SUBMITTED TO STATE AND DOD FOR NEGOTIATION OF AN AGREEMENT IN PANAMA TO COVER THE GAMBOA TEST AREA. U.S. NEGOTIATION TEAM WOULD BE DRAWN LARGELY FROM THE ISTHMUS. PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES, AGENDA, EXPECTED GOP NEGOTIATING POSITION AND RECOMMENDED FALL-BACK POSITIONS FOR USG.

4. PLAN SHOULD BE BASED ON OBJECTIVE OF ACHIEVING LICENS-
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ING ARRANGEMENT FOR USATTC WITHOUT NECESSITY OF USE PAYMENTS. U.S. WOULD BE WILLING TO: A) PROVIDE GOP WITH DETAILED BRIEFING ON USATTC, B) KEEP GOP ADVISED OF ONGOING AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES, C) SHARE APPROPRIATE DATA WITH GOP, AND D) IN KEEPING WITH GOP'S INTENTION TO USE AREA AS FOREST PRESERVE, TO CONTINUE TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENT.

5. PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS: A) HOW MUCH OF PRESENT GAMBOA TEST AREA NEEDS TO BE COVERED BY AN AGREEMENT, AND WHETHER SHARPLY REDUCED AREA WOULD SUFFICE IF IMPORTANT BUFFER AREA AROUND TEST SITES COULD BE EFFECTIVELY MAINTAINED BY GOP-POLICED FOREST PRESERVE; B) WHETHER AGREEMENT SOUGHT SHOULD BE FOR LIFE OF PANAMA CANAL TREATY OR SHORTER PERIOD (E.G. 5 YEARS WITH RENEWAL OPTION); C) WHAT, IF ANY, USE PAYMENT GOP MAY REQUEST. (GIVEN OPTION OF USATTC TRANSFER TO CERRO PALADO OR AS LAST RESORT TO EMPIRE RANGE AREA AND USG DESIRE TO AVOID ANY PAYMENTS FOR USE OF GAMBOA TEST SITE WE WOULD APPRECIATE SOUTHCOM/EMBASSY VIEWS ON POSSIBLE LEVEL OF PAYMENTS TO PANAMA WHICH USG SHOULD CONSIDER.) D) IN CONTEXT OF OTHER IMPORTANT PENDING NEGOTIATIONS, WHEN WOULD BE

APPROPRIATE DATES TO RAISE SUBJECT WITH GOP AND TO
INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS IN PANAMA.

6. EMBASSY AND SOUTHCOM OFFICIALS SHOULD NOT RPT NOT
AT THIS TIME INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH GOP OFFICIALS.

DURING NEGOTIATING SESSIONS IN AUGUST 1977 GOP OFFICIALS
INDICATED INFORMALLY THEY WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO
CONTINUED USATTC ACTIVITY IN THE GAMBOA AREA.

7. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH DOD. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, MILITARY AGREEMENTS, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE179020
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JWHITING:JG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780291-0565
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780756/aaaabvao.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fbcc0773-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1995789
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. ARMY TROPIC TEST CENTER
TAGS: PBOR, MARR, US, PN
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fbcc0773-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014